

## Rebuilding Sadr City, One Day at a Time

By Capt. Michael Martinez  
TF Lancer Public Affairs Officer

BAGHDAD -- Every day since the Madhi Militia turned in their weapons in October, there have been dramatic decreases of hostile activity in Sadr City. This turn of events has allowed the Soldiers of Task Force Lancer to help rebuild the city.

Day in and day out Task Force Lancer has been conducting missions such as; giving out sheep, frozen chickens and humanitarian-aid bags; protecting kerosene and propane stations and escorting sewage trucks to remove pools of sewage from the streets.

Since electricity is still a country-wide issue that is in the process of being remedied, the people of Sadr City rely heavily on kerosene and propane as their main source for heating and cooking.

"The station we were providing security for has only two hoses to refill kerosene tanks, and each person on average brings three to five tanks to be filled," said Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Butler, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment. "Everyday approximately 500-700 people wait in line and some wait all day and night just to refill their tanks. But overall they are happy to see us, because they know that by us being here they will get a fair price instead of paying the outrageous prices the vendors set."

While the government rate for kerosene is five Dinars per liter, some vendors were selling kerosene for as much as 300 Dinars per liter.

Another issue for Sadr City is the ever-present sewage that covers the streets. The smell of the sewage is a constant discomfort, but in some areas it is so strong that it is unbearable. Currently, there is a plan to rebuild the main sewage-line that runs through the city. However, in the mean time Task Force Lancer is providing temporary relief with sewage trunks.

"The neighborhood we are in is one of my model communities, so when I receive sewage assets I like to employ them here," said Capt. Douglas Chapman, Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment. "It shows them that we understand their problems and



Photos by Capt. Michael Martinez, TF Lancer Public Affairs

(Above) Capt. Douglas Chapman, Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, works with contractor removing sewage off the streets. (Right) Staff Sgt. Chad Sandoe hands out frozen chickens during a visit into Sadr City. With the recent decrease in insurgent activity in Sadr City, it has been easier for Soldiers to provide humanitarian aid to the Iraqi citizens.



are trying to apply a short-term solution to a long-term problem." Yet, the mission that has made the most immediate impact has been the sheep, chicken and humanitarian-aid bags that were given to the Iraqi civilians. They make an immediate impact, because they are tangible items that can be readily used and bring immediately relief said Staff Sgt. Chad Sandoe, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion.

"They are very well received," Sandoe said. "We have no problems with giving them out, because we get large crowds when we arrive. Soldiers also get into it by passing out candy, toys and school supplies they receive from donations back home to the kids. The big

thing about it is that since hostilities have subsided, we are trying to give something that makes an immediate impact on the people. The major projects we are undertaking are not as visible and take time. It truly does make an impact, especially with the children who say such statements like 'America very good' or chant 'good good mister.'"

It is a slow process, but like those old sayings "good food takes time" and "Rome wasn't built in a day" are self-evident for the accomplishment of great tasks. The task of rebuilding Sadr City is a great one and it takes great men and women to build one. That is way the Task Force Lancer Soldiers will rebuild Sadr City one day at a time.

## Holiday Reflections from the Front

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Soldiers really are a special breed.

"I'm not looking for a fight," said Sgt. Aaron Seigel, an infantry team leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. "I just do what I have to."

He made that comment to me while we were standing on a rooftop overlooking the last push by U.S. Marines against dug in insurgents in a southwestern neighborhood in Fallujah last month.

**We just do what we have to do.**

I've been thinking about his words, as the holiday season approaches. A year ago, we all knew we were coming to Iraq. The reasons we're here have been debated ad nauseum back home as America held its national elections.

But does it matter why we're here?

Most Soldiers I've talked to, don't ponder the reasons why we're here; at least not very often. The day-to-day reality of the mission at hand gives us all enough to worry about.

Spc. Richard Kinney is an automatic rifleman with 2-7 Cavalry. I asked him what he thought about Iraq ... and the Iraqi people. He just shrugged off the question.

"I don't think about that much," he said. "I just want me



By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

On the rooftop of his company command post in the heart of Fallujah, Sgt. Aaron Seigel reflects on the mission there. "I'm not looking for a fight," the infantry team leader with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment said. "I just do what I have to."

and my guys to get back home safe."

**We care for each other.**

Line units seem to have a great affection and affinity for each other in times like these. The shared dangers and deprivations of their daily duties bring about a close-knit pattern of life for these troops. They laugh and joke, and swap stories as they play cards between missions.

But we all can appreciate the concept of sharing: like the care packages our families send, which end up at work, divided up among our friends

and colleagues. It's about giving something to those who don't have it, and (in the case of sweets and food stuffs) to also avoid putting on 20 pounds in one sitting.

Mail call, even far from the relative safety of forward operating bases, reaches our Soldiers no matter where the mission takes them, keeping them connected with loved ones.

Scranton, Penn. native Spc. Tommie Anuszewski is a Chicago Bears fan and a member of 2-7 Cavalry. His name came out several times during a

mail call in downtown Fallujah, though his squad affectionately refers to him only by the first four letters of his name.

Faces light up as letters are passed out. Somebody out there loves us ... even Chicago Bear fans.

**We fight when we have to.**

When the mission is at hand, when danger lurks, a mask of tight-lipped concentration and determination replaces the laughter. A deadly seriousness sets in their eyes.

You can call it their "game face." It's all business.

After the missions, when it's time to wind down and reflect, it's sometimes a struggle to put things into words ... let alone perspective.

Sgt. Willie Hudgen is an infantry team leader with Company A, 2-7 Cavalry. He fought in Najaf in August. He fought again with the lead element spearheading the Marines' push into Fallujah last month. I asked him what the difference was between the two fights.

"You know," he said, after pausing for what seemed like an eternity to reflect on his answer, "there really is no difference. It's just ... war."

**The (Cav) spirit can move you.**

The Christmas season is a holy experience for most Christians, and a festive time for most Americans, regardless

**Continued on Page 5**

### Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

**Where do you live?**

**ayn taskun?**

#### Saturday

High: 65  
Low: 43



#### Sunday

High: 63  
Low: 46



#### Monday

High: 54  
Low: 33



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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## News Notes

### He Never Even Paid for the Burger

ROCHESTER, N.H. (AP) -- Tony Carr wanted to pay for his burger. Instead, police say, he ended up smooshing the microwaved patty in a store clerk's face. Police have issued an arrest warrant for Carr, of Berwick, Maine. Investigators say Carr got angry when the clerk at a Cumberland Farms would not allow him to pay for a hamburger while it was heating in the store microwave. The clerk, Scott Litzenberger, told Carr he had to bring the burger to the counter 15 feet away to pay for it.

### Puppy Gets Tired, Sent to the Vet

WACO, Texas (AP) -- Wayne Hyde saw his 10-month-old dog's head stuck in the center rim of a full-size tire. Hyde's girlfriend tried using Vaseline to release the dog, Cinnamon, whose head seemed bigger than the 4-inch-diameter ring around her neck. Hyde called the Bellmead Fire Department. Firefighters tried to cut the tire rim, but stopped to avoid hurting the dog. Then they used a rescue tool called the Jaws of Life, which uses hydraulic power to pry apart or slice open wrecked cars. The firefighters cut the rim out of the tire, then took Cinnamon and her heavy metal collar to the La Vega Veterinary Clinic. The vets coated the dog's neck and ears in a lubricant. Her head eventually popped out of the ring. She suffered only a little bruising and swelling around the neck.

### Is the water supposed to be this color?



*Austin American-Statesman*

A lone swimmer churns through the emerald waters of the spring-fed Deep Eddy Pool. Dozens of diehard swimmers flock to the pool during the winter months. The Friends of Deep Eddy Pool, a nonprofit organization, is in the process of raising \$1 million to restore the the 1939-era bathhouse built as the first Works Progress Administration project in Austin.

## Foundation Fosters Fishing Fun for Kids

LAMPASAS, Texas (*Cove Herald*) -- Give a kid a fish and it will wiggle out of his hands. Teach a kid to fish and he'll learn the fun of one of the most popular outdoor sports in the United States.

So is the goal of the Kid Fish Foundation, based in Little River. The 10-year-old nonprofit organization held its annual Kid Fish Day in Lampasas Saturday at W.M. Brook Park by Sulphur Creek. The organization began with hosting six events in 1994. This year President J.P. Brazeal said the organization has held 150 and 200 Kid Fish events throughout Texas.

Brazeal said Lampasas had about 125 children participate in the three-hour event.

"Our mission is to get as many kids and families involved as possible," Brazeal said.

The organization stocks the ponds or creeks with fish to give the children a better chance of catching something, Brazeal said. During the winter months, rainbow trout are used for stocked catches. Other months, channel catfish are used.



*Cove Herald*

Cole Gilmore, 5, stands anxiously by as his father, Clay Gilmore, removes a fish from his fishing line at the Lampasas Kid Fish Day, sponsored by the Kid Fish Foundation.

"So when they catch something it's a really nice fish," Brazeal said.

Brothers Austin, 14, and Lucas Kemp, 12, of Nix, enjoyed the fishing event Saturday but said the wait for a nibble was not their favorite part of the fishing experience.

"It's not the waiting, I'll tell you that," said Austin

Kemp as he reeled in his line for another cast out onto Sulphur Creek. "I guess the best part is catching the fish."

Both brothers have been fishing for six years and said this was not their first time to participate in the Lampasas Kid Fish Day.

However, for sisters Sarah, 12, and Emily Casey, 8, of Lampasas Saturday's events was their first fishing competition.

"They like to go fishing," said their father Daniel Casey. Hanging by the water's edge near the spillway, the girls used cane poles provided by the Kid Fish Foundation to try and snag a catch.

Besides the fun of casting out the line and trying to reel in a prize, the organization also gives a brief Kid Fish College before each event. Children are taught the basics of conservation, respect for fish and other fishermen, good places for fishing and what to expect when they catch a fish. Brazeal said the organization also stresses catch and release.

"It's all focused on the kids," Brazeal said.

## McGrady's Last-Second Shot Shocks Spurs

HOUSTON, Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) -- They kept saying they were in it, that they still had a chance. But the Rockets could not have foreseen this. Forget seen. Few could have even imagined it. Jeff Van Gundy kept shouting, "There's still time, there's still time." But there were just seconds and not many of those.



*Houston Chronicle*

Tracy McGrady shoots the game-winning shot with 1.7 seconds left Thursday at Toyota Center to send the Rockets to a shocking 81-80 win over the San Antonio Spurs. McGrady flew through a 13-point burst of lightning strikes in the last 35-seconds of the game.

Then, suddenly everything -- even a "miracle" as Van Gundy cheerily would call it -- seemed possible, even if the miracle worker himself could not believe it.

Maybe it was a miracle, but it did happen. Tracy McGrady flew through a 35-second, 13-point burst of lightning strikes capped by his last of four rapid-fire 3-pointers with 1.7 seconds left to send the Rockets to an 81-80 shocker over the Spurs on Thursday night.

"The way I was feeling those last couple seconds, I felt like anything I would throw up, would go in," McGrady said. "The rim felt really big to me out there."

"To come back and pull out the game, all my teammates jumping on me, I swear I've never been a part of anything like that. And for all those fans that left, gosh you missed a great game."

They missed seeing the Rockets score 17 points in 52.4 seconds. They didn't see McGrady score eight points in 8.9 seconds or exceed Reggie Miller's legendary 1995 playoff run of three last-minute 3s to beat the Knicks.

But as it is with the most celebrated of performances, far more than the 16,170 that had been at Toyota Center will long repeat the story of the phenomenon they saw. And if they need just a little more to tell, McGrady did all that after he was forced off the court and to the locker room in the fourth quarter with stomach pains.

"We got a chance to see firsthand why he is one of the greatest players in the world," Rockets guard Bob Sura said. "To pull something like that out, amazing. It was unbelievable."

## NHL Players Offer 24 Percent Salary Rollback

TORONTO (AP) -- The NHL players' association offered an immediate 24 percent rollback of salaries Thursday as the centerpiece of a proposal handed to the league in an effort to end the season-long lockout.

"It will immediately reduce the value of every current player contract," NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow said. "It will immediately set a dramatically lower base in the negotiation of new contracts and it contains numerous systemic changes in all the leverage points that are contained in the collective agreement."

The union said all current contracts would be cut, a move that would save NHL teams \$270 million in the first year and \$528 million over three years. The players' association's offer on Sept. 9 only included a 5 percent salary rollback.

"One aspect of the proposal is very significant," NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said. "That element is a recognition by the union of

our economic condition, but it is a one-time element."

"We have said consistently that the focus must be on the overall systemic issues and the long-term needs and health of our game."

By union estimates, the six-year, six-point proposal would save the NHL a total that exceeds \$1 billion in that time span.

The salary rollback would change the dynamic for unsigned players, who would work out new deals based on the adjusted salary figures of comparable players and not on the value of their original contracts.

Time is running short to work out a deal and still have a legitimate season. Already 382 regular-season games, plus the All-Star contest have been canceled.

The negotiating session was the first between the league and the NHLPA in three months.



## In Brief

### Tyson in Trouble With the Law

SCOTTSDALE, Az. (AP) -- Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson was arrested on suspicion of misdemeanor criminal damage for allegedly jumping on



the hood of a car outside a nightclub. Tyson allegedly dented the hood of a car when he jumped on it as its driver was leaving the club around 1 a.m. on Nov. 27. Asaf Alikadic, 22, told police he had stopped his car to let Tyson cross the street when the boxer started screaming and yelling and then jumped on the hood of the car on his hands and knees and began to pound on it.

### Priceless Works of Art Recovered

ST. LOUIS (AP) -- Some pieces of a missing multi-million-dollar art collection that includes works by Pablo Picasso and Willem de Kooning have been recovered, authorities said. FBI special agent Peter Krusing said that investigators recovered some paintings, prints and sculptures stolen from a storage facility in the St. Louis suburb of Bridgeton. But over half of the more than 100 works remain missing. The theft was reported Oct. 13 after an inventory showed the items were missing. Officials did not say which works were returned or how much of the total value the recovered art represented.

## Ready for Flight...



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Spc. Matthew White of Rogersville, Ala., a mechanic with Company A, 615th Aviation Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division stands next to an AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter prior to the aircraft lifting off on a maintenance flight. Before aircraft are put back into regular flight operations, they must be taken on a maintenance flight to ensure quality control of work conducted by the mechanics.

## Soldiers are a Special Breed

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of their religious upbringing. Memories of Rudolph, Frosty and Kris Kringle television specials (which, most of us own now on DVD ... at least those of us with kids) are rekindled at this time of year. Christmas carols and Christmas classics play on the radio, and sometimes in our heads without thinking.

Christmas is about families and family traditions. It's also the hardest time of the year for many of us to be separated from loved ones.

It takes a special breed to sacrifice hearth and home. Even though we do not have the comforts of home here, it's comforting to me, at least, to have one another.

We share a common bond. We are Soldiers ... and we're the First Team.

When passing a Soldier and getting the greeting of the day, the deputy division chaplain, Chaplain (Maj.) Grant Johnson snaps his salute and gives a deep-throated reply which lets you know his line of work: "First Team ... for God!" he'll exclaim.

Even the religiously indifferent smile at that response, but it has been said that there are no atheists in foxholes.

When the bullets and rockets are flying, that just may still be true. God only knows. Merry Christmas. (And, Go Packers!)

## Soldiers Take Time for Some Friendly Competition

By Spc. Jan Critchfield  
122nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HOPE, Baghdad -- 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers of Task Force Lancer took a day for friendly competition Dec. 5 as a break from patrolling what are some of the most unforgiving streets Baghdad has had to offer since the First Team arrived here in February.

"We're having what we call our 'Banner Day,'" said Lt. Col. Gary Volesky, commander of 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team. "It's a sporting day for all the elements of [Task Force 2-5]. It's a day for friendly competition for a banner that goes to whoever wins the most events. We do it to build a little camaraderie ... a time to just enjoy oneself for the day."

With each company competing for bragging rights and a ribbon to hang from their guidon in soccer, football, basketball, horseshoes, relay race and tug-of-war competitions, the number one spot was hotly contested.

One thing that wasn't hot, however, was the weather. Usually Banner Day takes place at their home in Fort Hood,

Texas.

"We do this every six months back at garrison (Fort Hood)," Volesky said. "We were going to do it in the summer but the weather was real different, so we said, 'Hey, let's do banner day.'"

"We decided to take a day for some friendly competition amongst the companies," Command Sgt. Maj. Fernando Rodriguez, Command Sgt. Maj. of Task Force 2-5 said. "We haven't been able to do it so far because of the weather ... and also because of all the fighting we've been doing. The mission hasn't allowed us to do it."

By far the most dangerous area of Baghdad, the area of operations that Task Force Lancer is responsible had been a focus of fighting until the Mahdi Militia agreed to disband in October.

"What we wanted to do was have a day in which we could involve everybody with the different events that we wanted to do," Rodriguez said. "It's a chance for the guys to come together from the different companies, who normally operate independently. The companies get to come together as a company and the battalion as well. ... This boosts my own morale. I don't get to see the guys together like this very much.



By Spc. Jan Critchfield, 122nd MPAD

A Soldier of Task Force 2-5 "Lancer" sprints off after his company's guidon was passed to him during the guidon relay event during Banner Day, a day of competition and relaxation for Soldiers of Task Force Lancer.

We get together for award ceremonies and memorial services, and those are really the only times. It's been a good day."